Penalty Imposed on ONGC

310. SHRI M. VINCENT: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Hazira-based ONGC has been heavily penalised by the Central Excise and Customs Deprtment recently; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) and (b) The collector of Customs and Central Excise, Baroda vide his order dated 17-12-91 has imposed a penalty of Rs. 75 lakhs on ONGC, Hazira project for not following the prescribed Central Excise procedure. An appeal is being preferred against the order.

Offer by British Gas

311. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a report pulished in the Indian Express dated the 11th February, 1992 under the heading "British Gas keen to enter India in a big way";

(b) if so, whether Government have received any proposals from the British Gas Compay for becoming a partner in the joint venture with Gas Authority of India Ltd. for the implementation of the Bombay City Gas Distribution Project and ONGC for the development of existing oil and gas discoveries;

(c) if so, what are the details of the proposals;

(d) whether Government have examined the proposals;

(e) if so, with what results: and

(f) whether Government propose to enlist cooperation of the Multi National Compnay for distant areas like Tripura etc. for exploring Natural Gas?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) GAIL has received proposals from several companies, including British Gas for joint venture for the implementation of the Bombay City Gas Distribution Project and is appraising the relative merits of these proposals. No proposal has yet been received from British Gas for a joint venture with ONGC for development of existing oil and gas discoveries.

(f) Two blocks in Mizoram and Cachar in the North-Eastern region of the country are included in the 72 blocks offered to indian and Foreign companies for exploration for oil and gas under the Fourth Round of bidding.

Oil Import Bill

312. SHRI DULESHWAR MEENA : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether India's oil import bill for the current year is expected to increase by hundreds of crores of rupees as compared to that of the preceding year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the estimated amount of the Oil Import Bill for 1991-92 alongwith the names of the countries from which imports are likely to be made and at what price ; and

(c) the manner in which Government propose to meet the alarming situation ?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND) : (a) to (c) The reasons for increase in oil import bill are increase in the volumes of import and exchange rate adjustment. The oil import bill for 1991-92 is likely to be more than Rs. 12,000 crores. Oil imports are done both under term contracts and through spot purchases. Spot purchases are not always relatable to specific countries. Efforts are being made to maximise the indigenous production.

LPG Connections

313. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM and NATURAL GAS be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 2964 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 18th December, 1991 and state :

(a) the names of MPs on whose recommendations the LPG connection were allotted alongwith the number of connections in each case during the year 1991 and whether the MPs were informed to this effect ;

(b) the number of complaints received from the MPs for non-allotment of LPG connections against their quota ;